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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

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DATE: December 10, 1958

SUBJECT: Berlin

PARTICIPANTS:

Sir Harold Caccia, British Ambassador
Lort Hood, Minister, British Embassy

Mr. Robert D. Murphy, Deputy Under Secretary
Mr. Robert H. McBride, WE

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Ambassador Caccia said he was extremely sorry that Adenauer, apparently for reasons of health, was unable to go to London today. He thought that in our forthcoming talks in Paris we should let the Germans do most of the talking on the subject of Berlin. Mr. Murphy said we have had various thoughts on this problem, one of which was the possibility of sending an interim note to the Soviets asking certain leading questions regarding their attitude toward and the results of the repudiation of the agreements. He said we did not have any firm view on this and that it was not our thought that any commitments would be entered into such a note but merely that this would bridge the period before our definitive reply. He added that there was of course no question of abandoning any of our rights in Berlin but we were faced with the question of what to do now.

Ambassador Caccia said that we should consider whether or not our objective was to retain the status quo in Berlin. Mr. Murphy said we were not certain as to the Soviet motives for going into the Berlin problem at the present time. Possibly it was a result of some internal problem in the Soviet Union, perhaps connected with the January Congress of the Communist Party. We had the impression that the Soviet initiative had been taken with very little staffing and was not well thought out.

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